



First I-15 work slated for May 6; HOV lane now a regular lane

Michael Rigert - Daily Herald | Posted: Monday, April 26, 2010 12:25 am

It's official -- barring inclement weather, Interstate 15 CORE Reconstruction will begin on May 6 on the S-curve between the Orem University Parkway and Provo Center Street freeway exchanges.

The first segment in the Utah Department of Transportation's \$1.725 billion freeway widening project, the five-month S-curve work will restructure elements of the freeway to facilitate greater traffic mobility during the duration of the project, said Heather Barnum, spokeswoman for the UDOT I-15 CORE project.

When completed in two phases by December of 2012, the I-15 rebuild will add two lanes in each direction of the 24 miles from Lehi Main Street to Spanish Fork. The High Occupancy Vehicle lane, or express lane, will be extended to run from U.S. Highway 6 in Spanish Fork all the way to the 2300 North exchange in Salt Lake City, she said.

But the May 6 initiation of the S-curve work -- which will partially straighten out the curve, increase driver visibility, add lighting and bring it up to current national design standards -- may come as a jolt to motorists and commuters who are unprepared. One lane of travel for southbound traffic will be closed during daytime hours, and there is the potential for significant delays if people don't begin to make plans to alter their schedules now, Barnum said.

If motorists don't adjust their plans and use alternatives such as carpooling, mass transportation, telecommuting or changing up their drive times during peak travel periods, delays through the S-curve could be one to two hours during rush hour, she said previously.

Even more disconcerting, delays could balloon to five to six hours during major holidays (Memorial Day, Independence Day, Pioneer Day, and Labor Day) if traffic volumes through the S-curve are not reduced.

"With May 6 [confirmed], now is a good time to continue to plan ahead," Barnum said. "We know work will be happening in May, so people should start to look at their Memorial Day plans."

If overall traffic can be reduced by 20 percent, which is UDOT's goal, she said, then travel times through the S-curve may be comparable to current figures.

For travelers planning to go out of town through the freeway construction zone over the May 31 holiday weekend, she suggests either leaving a day early or returning a day later.

UDOT is making a variety of travel planning resources for the I-15 reconstruction available to the public including its website (www.udot.utah.gov/i15core/), signing up for weekly e-mail updates, or through Facebook and Twitter.

"This is a good time to gear up and get ready," Barnum said.

Another change within the construction corridor is that UDOT crews have recently completed work to convert the HOV or express lanes to general travel lanes in order to better accommodate traffic volumes during construction, according to a news release.

Contiguous white express lane striping has been replaced by a broken white line and the rumble strips have been removed.

"For safety reasons and because of planned lane restrictions and closures, the express lanes in Utah County will remain open to all drivers until the 24-mile reconstruction project is finished in December 2012," Barnum stated in the news release.

Resources:

I-15 CORE Reconstruction Project Resources

- **Project's main page:** www.udot.utah.gov/i15core/
- **Information hot line:** 1-888-i15core (888-415-2673)
- **Information e-mail:** i15core@utah.gov
- **Interactive map:** <http://i15core.utah.gov/InteractiveMap/>
- **Know Where, Know Why:** www.udot.utah.gov/knowwhereknowwhy/